

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA
SOUTH BEND DIVISION

NORMAN CHAPIN,

Plaintiff,

v.

CASE NO. 3:23-CV-450-DRL-MGG

FOREST RIVER, INC., JEFF COUCH
CAMPERS LLC, DOES 1-25,

Defendants.

ORDER

On November 29, 2023, the Court held a telephonic status conference for the purpose of selecting an appropriate date in conducting a settlement conference.

Appearing for Plaintiffs was Robert F. Brennan PHV and Keith R Hagan; for Defendant was Thomas Jackson Bemenderfer.

The Court hereby schedules a settlement conference by **video teleconference (Zoom Gov)** in this case for **January 23, 2024 at 11:00 AM (EST)** before Magistrate Judge Michael G. Gotsch, Sr. Information about accessing the video conference will be sent to the parties by electronic mail.

This settlement conference represents a final effort to achieve a settlement of all issues in the case; it is not designed to be a preliminary or intermediate step in the settlement process. It is assumed that by the time of the scheduled conference the parties will have made a concerted, but unsuccessful, effort to settle this case on their own. This conference is not intended to replace settlement discussions and negotiations

between counsel, nor is it intended to relieve the parties of their responsibility to arrive at a settlement on their own without court intervention. If no settlement is reached during the court's conference, it is expected that no settlement will be possible in the future and that the case can proceed to trial. The conference will be conducted in such a manner as not to prejudice any party in the event settlement is not reached.

In light of the Court's precautions regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), and pending further order of the Court, all settlement conferences shall proceed by video teleconference. Due to the courthouse restrictions, appearance in person shall not be required; however, each party or an agent with full authority to settle shall participate in the video teleconference. Should this requirement present any hardship, please reach out to the court as soon as possible at the chambers email address:

gotsch_chambers@innd.uscourts.gov, indicating the circumstances and the relief sought. Please include the case name and number in the reference line of any email message sent to the above-listed chambers email address.

At least fourteen (14) days prior to the conference, counsel shall engage in meaningful settlement discussions which, at a minimum, shall include a reasonable demand by Plaintiffs and a reasonable offer by Defendant. Failure to receive an offer or demand from the other side does not excuse compliance with this requirement. During or prior to these discussions, counsel for Plaintiffs shall provide counsel for Defendant with a written breakdown of any demand for money damages. If a party's settlement position is based in whole or in part upon the opinion of a physician or other expert, such opinion, along with any written report by the physician or expert, shall be

disclosed to opposing party. Counsel are encouraged to make a concerted effort to settle the case on their own prior to the formal settlement conference.

On or before **January 15, 2024**, each party shall provide the court with a brief confidential settlement memorandum. Under no circumstances will settlement memoranda be disclosed to opposing counsel and shall not become part of the file of the case, but shall be used exclusively by the magistrate judge in preparing for and contributing to the mediation session. The following information shall be included in the memorandum:

1. A brief statement of the facts of the case, and of the claims and defenses, i.e., the statutory or other grounds upon which the claims are founded. This statement should identify the major factual and legal issues in dispute, and include an honest appraisal of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the case. Legal arguments should not be included unless they are absolutely critical to the evaluation and/or settlement of the case, and, if necessary to be included, shall be strictly limited to basic legal arguments. Copies of contracts, agreements, business records, photographs, or other tangible evidence may be attached to the confidential settlement memoranda if critical to the negotiations.

2. A summary of settlement negotiations to date, including the results of the required discussions between counsel, the parties' position on settlement, and the last settlement proposal tendered by a party, if any.

3. The name and title of the individual(s) possessing ultimate decision-making authority with respect to settlement who will be attending the

conference, together with a certification by counsel that such person(s) have ultimate decision-making authority with respect to settlement.

The memorandum should be mailed to Magistrate Judge Michael G. Gotsch, Sr., 201 Robert A. Grant Courthouse, 204 S. Main St., South Bend, Indiana 46601 and be marked CONFIDENTIAL on the envelope, or emailed to:

gotsch_chambers@innd.uscourts.gov.

Also, please note that all federal courts are operating under heightened security measures and COVID-19 screening protocol. Individuals entering this building will be required to present picture identification, state the purpose of their visit and pass all screening procedures. Visitors who are unable to present picture identification will not be admitted to the courthouse. Counsel should advise their clients and all individuals attending the settlement conference of these security requirements. Your cooperation with these necessary procedures is greatly appreciated.

SO ORDERED this 29th day of November 2023.

s/Michael G. Gotsch, Sr.
Michael G. Gotsch, Sr.
United States Magistrate Judge